



News Release

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NOAA 01-R145
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 25, 2001

NOAA, TROUT UNLIMITED JOIN FORCES FOR COASTAL HABITAT RESTORATION

NOAA to Provide up to \$1 Million for Local Coastal Restoration Efforts

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Trout Unlimited are combining forces to restore habitat vital to the conservation of America's coastal fisheries. Under the new partnership, NOAA is slated to provide up to \$1 million over a three-year period in support of Trout Unlimited habitat restoration projects.

The NOAA/Trout Unlimited partnership, managed through NOAA's Community-Based Restoration Program, has provided \$210,000 in first year funding to support Trout Unlimited fish habitat projects selected in Embrace-A-Stream and other Trout Unlimited coastal fishery programs.

The NOAA-funded projects provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources.

"As an avid fly fisherman myself, I know how important habitat is to the future of salmon and other game fish," said Scott Gudes, NOAA acting administrator. "Partnerships with organizations like Trout Unlimited bring benefits directly to local communities and are a great way to restore and protect habitat where it is most appreciated and needed."

"Given the common goals of Embrace-A-Stream and the Community-Based Restoration Program, it was only a matter of time before Trout Unlimited and NOAA joined forces to restore and conserve the places and fisheries that all anglers love," said Trout Unlimited Resource Director Joe McGurrian. "The Embrace-A-Stream program will be the primary vehicle for supporting small grant projects. We will also work jointly with NOAA to identify a limited number of larger scale watershed efforts that will be eligible to receive larger awards."

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The localities of the initial round of projects selected for 2001 funding include Snohomish, Wash.; Devil's Gulch, Calif.; Powell Creek, Ore.; and Norwalk River, Conn. Many of the projects chosen involve Pacific and Atlantic salmon. All of the projects emphasize the basic connection between habitat and the overall ecology of our coastal rivers and estuaries. Work to protect instream flows, improve fish habitat quality and create fish passage is of benefiting many fish including trout, salmon, shad, river herring and striped bass as well as estuarine resources such as submerged aquatic vegetation and shellfish.

Project Summaries:

Salmon and Plant Restoration in Puget Sound – Snohomish County, Wash.
The Saltwater Anglers of Mukilteo Chapter is restoring coastal cutthroat trout, bull trout, coho and chinook salmon with student volunteers. The program incorporates ongoing maintenance and monitoring over several years until full site restoration is complete.

Devil's Gulch – Marin County, Calif.

The North Bay Chapter of Trout Unlimited is working to improve livestock management and to reduce erosion in the tributaries of the Lagunitas River system which supports steelhead and one of the best remaining wild coho salmon runs in northern California.

Powell Creek Fish Passage – Josephine County, Ore.

The Middle Rogue Steelheaders Chapter and other community members will develop fish passage around a dam on a Rogue River tributary in southern Oregon that will allow irrigation water withdrawals without impeding runs of both steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout.

Norwalk River – Wilton/Fairfield County, Conn.

The Mianus Chapter will restore more than 6,000 feet of stream corridor near the town of Wilton. The project combines restoration of riparian areas with placement of woody debris to create fish spawning and rearing habit for trout, shad, and river herring.

The Programs:

Embrace-A-Stream is Trout Unlimited's primary program for funding local Trout Unlimited habitat projects and is the leading grassroots trout and salmon conservation program in the country. Since its inception, Embrace-A-Stream has awarded more than \$2.4 million to 673 individual Trout Unlimited chapter and council projects nationwide. Embrace-A-Stream funds are raised almost entirely through voluntary contributions from Trout Unlimited members across the country.

The Community-Based Restoration Program, a financial and technical federal assistance program within the NOAA fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to fund grassroots, community-based activities. Projects restore living marine resources and their habitats and promote stewardship and a conservation ethic.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA fisheries) is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat. To learn more about NOAA fisheries, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

For more information on NOAA's Community-Based Restoration Program, please visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/>; for more information on Trout Unlimited's Embrace-A-Stream Program, please visit: <http://www.tu.org/campaigns/embrace-a-stream.html>